FATHER

FRANCIS WOODLOCK

S.J.

1871——1940

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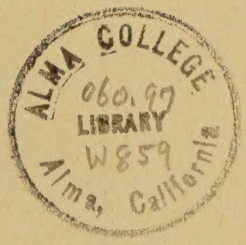

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This sketch of the life of Fr. Francis Woodlock was originally written for the interest of his Jesuit brethren and is now published to meet the requests of his other friends and of a wider public. It has been made out of the materials supplied by men who were his colleagues at various stages of his life, by Frs. Francis Devas, Christopher Wilmot, Luke Bellanti, C. C. Martindale, James Brodrick and others. In many cases the accounts that these Fathers wrote are here given as they wrote them, in their own words. At the cost of some diversity of styles in the one narrative, it was thought better to preserve the very individual and recognisable style of the contributors: uniformity would have sacrificed much that is of interest and has its own flavour.

The responsibility of this sketch, especially of its imperfections, rests with me. But for the most part my own share is merely that of narrator and editor.

VINCENT TURNER, S.J.

FATHER FRANCIS WOODLOCK

THE FIFTH CHILD of a family of nine, Francis Woodlock was born on September 23, 1871, at Monkstown, Co. Dublin. For his education he went, in 1880, to Beaumont. Very popular with the boys, he was not conspicuous for hard work and could be an affliction to prefects. He excelled at games : at cricket a good bat and the best boxer in the school. He was, too, a very good actor. This is the impression that has remained vivid ; it is exactly what Fr. Devas records :

" When I first saw Frank Woodlock, he was a god among gods. I was in Figures at St. John's (in the same class with Gerald, Frank's younger brother, who died soon after leaving Beaumont), and we were on the cricket field watching an out-match. Frank was in Rhetoric and, much more important, in the First Eleven. Tall, thin, good-looking, he was batting and scoring with easy but concentrated vigour, and his popularity could be gauged by the bursts of cheering that accompanied his runs. Afterwards, as I watched him talking with his peers (he gave Gerald a nod but did not speak to either of us), I was fascinated by his dare-devil expression, not exactly truculent but expectant, ready for any excitement that might happily occur or be created. Possibly this impression of mine may have been fostered by the stories we had heard of his many and splendid exploits before he became a Rhetorician and too grand a man to stoop to mere boyish escapades."

On September 7, 1889, he joined the Jesuit noviciate at Manresa. The years that followed would appear to show the formation of that personality which Father Sydney Smith had in mind when on one occasion he described him as " aggressive but engaging "—the keynote of so many of his dealings with other people in later years. As a scholastic he taught at Mount St. Mary's, near Sheffield, and the

school had rapturous memories of his abounding vitality and big-boyishness, of his gaiety and versatility, of his friendliness and universal popularity; and of his prowess with a cricket bat.

He was ordained priest at St. Beuno's College, on July 31, 1902, and finished his theology there. In 1903 and again from 1910 to 1912, and after the War from 1919 to 1921, he was at Stonyhurst, and in the years between, from 1905 to 1910, he worked in Leeds, first for a year at the Church and thereafter at the College, both recent foundations. Of Fr. Woodlock's life at Leeds and at Stonyhurst a full account is to hand and we shall quote it. For this, as for much description of Fr. Frank's later period at Farm Street, we are indebted to Fr. Bellanti.

"He had been sent to Leeds with his great friends, Fr. Bodkin and Fr. Alfred Meyer (Fr. Bodkin was later to be Rector of Stonyhurst and Provincial, and the founder of Heythrop College), and they gave a wonderful send-off to the new foundation. They overwhelmed the Education Authorities and Inspectors with their affability, address, aplomb and manifest *expertise* as teachers (superb window-dressing, Fr. Frank used to call it), and of course they won the hearts of all the good Catholic mothers in the place. Fr. Woodlock in the freshness of his priesthood was bound to be the perfect pioneer: so human, natural and debonnaire, and so ready to deploy without the least compunction his irresistible charm. Nothing came amiss to him in those days, as I learnt from him and from Fr. Bodkin later on. Possessing very sketchy ideas of tonic sol-fa and with next to no musical equipment, he took the singing-class, and what is more, made a feature of it. He was in his element as a pedagogic swashbuckler. If the Inspectors proved unduly inquisitive, he would ingeniously steer them on to the shoals and quicksands of metaphysics and psychology and there leave them stranded and palpitating, if not high and dry! In visiting homes and making new contacts, his was the welcome figure, his the knack of bouncing the babies and getting them to gurgle with delight, the art of thrilling the young with his quips and pranks and leading the entire household to demand

another visit soon. Though Leeds only kept him for a short time the friends he made there remained friends for life. ' You see I left there before I was found out ' was how he summed up this adventurous interlude.

" When Fr. Bodkin came from Leeds to be a very young Rector of Stonyhurst, it seemed inevitable that Fr. Frank should follow, first as Professor of Philosophy to the Philosophers and, after some years, as Spiritual Father. His coming meant much to us young scholastics. We clustered round him. In his spacious room near the top of the Purbrick Tower we knew we were always welcome. He liked to have us there, to hear of the latest triumph or débâcle, to be ' in the know.' He could listen and laugh and understand. To him we poured out our schemes, criticisms, hopes, and woes—if any—and I gratefully believe we were none the worse for this addition of a heightened tempo to our lives.

" Fr. Frank, with his marked ability, readiness and vitality, might well have taken up intellectual work at this period. Seemingly, he felt no urge whatever in this direction. It was clear that the burden of his Professorship sat lightly on his shoulders. Though he remained a keen ' Thomist ' and a formidable dialectician who could drive an argument home and unerringly dissect a fallacy, he felt no call for the exercise of such gifts in his milieu of ' Philosophers.' Let me add for the benefit of a later generation that this honorific title was accorded to a group of twenty to thirty youths who were supposed to be completing their education at Stonyhurst. They were all young men of means, some were foreigners learning English, most were boys just out of school. In their enhanced status of ' Philosophers ' with their own private rooms and a pleasantly unexacting curriculum, they could for a year or two indulge in every form of sport in ideal surroundings. What a feature, glamorous, striking, all but incredible they were, in the Stonyhurst world of those days ! World-War-One saw the end of them. Why has none been found to tell their story ? . . .

" In all contentious issues, Fr. Frank was a fighter,

uncompromising, provocative, fearless of consequences, typically Irish. . . . From my earliest days with him I can recall his readiness to espouse the cause of the underdog. Time and again, whenever he sensed unfairness in any form, he would intervene with a logic and a vehemence which could be very disconcerting to 'diplomatists'—then as now concerned to frame an acceptable formula. But this side of his character having been stressed, let it be even more emphatically stated that Fr. Frank was anything but a rebel. He could fight a straight fight but he was unable to quarrel. Never was he the least bit touchy or suspicious or chilly : never resentful. We young masters, blest as we were with such understanding Superiors as Fr. Pedro Gordon or Fr. Bodkin, found him not only a champion in trouble but also a human, judicious and most sympathetic counsellor. We could rely on him to help us in every trouble. Call this intimacy of daily dealings what you will, I can only say that when he left Stonyhurst we knew that a light had gone out of our firmament.

" It was during this Stonyhurst period that Fr. Woodlock began to be widely known as a lecturer and special preacher. He was quick to seize on any illustration or homely anecdote and to clothe it with a warm sympathy all his own. He valued the human touch. Successful lectures on the Passion stimulated him to build up a great collection of lantern slides on the life of Our Lord, and to add them to the store he had 'inherited' from Fr. Gallwey. Most of these slides he made himself, for he was an expert photographer ; and after some experiments he learned to colour them to advantage. He loved playing with his Indian inks. Just as Father Thurston used often to improve the recreation hour at Farm Street with his paper-knife slicing up some ponderous *Geschichte*, so Fr. Frank would converse gaily with us while colouring his pink-and-gold angels. He took these sets of slides with him wherever he went. He could gauge the quality of his audience and adapt himself in both selection and style of talk to their levels. Numberless Parish-halls and Town-halls and Schools and Convents

threw their doors open to him in these years. He loved being wanted and welcome everywhere and doing good. Who wouldn't? When, in later years, he found that he had no time for 'this sort of thing,' I asked him to lend the slides to Stonyhurst so that the fresh eyes of successive generations might rest on his pictures. He most generously and gladly consented. Pictures, with a simple and vivid commentary, ineffaceably impress young minds. One hopes they are still in weekly use as he would love them to be, and that in this bequest *defunctus adhuc loquitur.*

"Father Frank's work at Stonyhurst fell into two parts. I have implied that as a Professor to the Philosophers he was a bit wasted. Be that as it may, he came into his own as Spiritual Father. The years and merits of a Spiritual Father in a big school have much to do with the limitations or extensions of his job. Fr. Woodlock, now in his prime and bursting with energy, entered with immense zest into school-life, and (where boy-life is least confined) into the games and recreational activities. Over and above his official duties he coached at cricket, was an enthusiastic spectator at every out-match, organised the boxing, entertained visiting teams and made happy contacts with other schools. That genius of a schoolmaster, Grenfell of Parkgate, Cheshire, became his intimate friend. Fruitful visits were exchanged. Grenfell was only too pleased to let those favoured Jesuits who enjoyed his hospitality at Mostyn House see for themselves what can be achieved among quite ordinary small boys by an extraordinary man. No school, not even the pick of young Stonyhurst and younger Hodder 'on their toes,' could compete with his little fry in writing and spelling! Grenfell regularly brought his little boxers to Stonyhurst to meet Fr. Frank's team. These contests led to a grand renascence of Stonyhurst boxing. The Boxing Club with its beginnings in Third Playroom grew and flourished under his fostering care, and in four or five years Stonyhurst, with its Bells and Crouchers, had leapt into the forefront of Public School, and University, and Army boxing. Fr. Frank's readiness to throw himself heart and soul into these varied pursuits

had much to do with the healthy and robust spirit of the school. His interventions were a tonic. He knew all the boys personally and all about them. His room was beseiged by a boisterous clientèle which no prefectorial 'ukase' could quench or quell. . . . Any of these boys would have been surprised if you had spoken to them about the Spiritual Father. They had as little idea or desire as he to regard him in any official status. He was just simply Fr. Woodlock, a universal friend, a champion in troubles of any sort, an invigoratingly radiant influence, full of suggestions for alleviating the humdrum and boredoms of school-life, the most unofficial personage in the school, intolerant only of put-up partitions and pettier divisions—sweeping over the boulders and black looks of any Quisling or Quidnunc in any department with all the cheerful incontinence of the Hodder in full spate. To the boys, as to us—inconsiderate and unconsidered junior masters—he was a very Fount of Arethusa bubbling out of the waves, the horse you could put your last shirt on, the flag that would never fly half-mast!"

For a short time before the first World War Fr. Woodlock was back at his old school, Minister at Beaumont. He was soon, however, appointed a military chaplain, and after serving at various camps in England sailed for France in April, 1915. On June 17 he was mentioned in despatches and was awarded the M.C. in March, 1918, and a Portuguese decoration came to him in 1919. In France he was first with a field ambulance at the Front and later on at Étretat in a hospital. Towards the end he was assistant principal chaplain at the Base Camp at Boulogne, and it was here that most was heard of him. He had great opportunities for talking with young officers who were just beginning their Army life; he preached much and effectively, and lectured much to every class from Army doctors to Chinamen. ("I am scribbling away," he wrote to his mother, "every quiet moment trying to get a lecture written out in full by Monday morning. It is to give the 'kernel' of Christianity and is to be translated by a Chinese interpreter, who will read it out on Xmas evening in a big

hall in the Chinese camp, while I show pictures of our Lord's life. It is a bit puzzling what to put in and what to leave out—also how to put our doctrines to make them clear to the curious pagan mind of a Chinese audience.")

His letters home at this time are full of lecture engagements, talks, sermons, social engagements ; but his lectures fill the larger bulk. Already one of those apparently in most demand was his lecture on Lourdes which later on he gave many times in England. Characteristic, too, is the following passage, from a letter to his mother from Lourdes, January 10, 1919 : he had taken a party of some 68 Australian and British soldiers to make the Stations of the Cross there, and on the way had picked up a group of 60 or 70 Americans who were sightseeing at the Grotto ; they all made the Stations together. " After we had come to the last station—at the bottom of the hill—I invited any who *really* promised to be ' on the side of Christ ' to return to the top and I had the whole crowd photographed on their knees at the Calvary group. The photo was to be a souvenir of their ' Stations ' and their promise to our Lord. Only very few fell out, and it was most consoling to hear them speak afterwards of their eagerness to have a copy of the picture."

" He was a dear friend of mine, and a wonderful chaplain," says Fr. Woodlock's chief at this time, Fr. Bernard Rawlinson of Downside, and he goes on to speak of his " immense debt of gratitude."

Demobilised in April, 1919, Fr. Frank spent a few months in retreat work at Whinney House, Gateshead, Newcastle-on-Tyne (his memory is still held in affection there), and in October went once again to Stonyhurst, this time (as has been earlier related) as Spiritual Father. But presently his gifts and his zest were given a wider range and in July of 1921 he was appointed to Farm Street.

At Farm Street he leaped at once into a programme of remorselessly hard work for which his appetite never flagged until, a few months before his death, his health began to break down. He was never idle, his colleagues say, and had no amusements : this should have made him dull, preoccupied, unsociable, instead of which he was

always fresh, always kind, and always welcomed visitors with genuine pleasure. He was a tireless reader and copious note-taker, with endless files of well-indexed notes of reference on endless subjects, and took great pains in preparing sermons and lectures. He preached sermon after sermon, controversial sermons as well as "ordinary" ones. In these latter, as he admitted and as was noticeable in his preaching at, say, the 12 o'clock Mass, he gave rein to sentiment and emotion: he aimed at it, as he said, but it represented a quality of his personal piety. Among the controversial sermons the most notable, perhaps, were the dialogue sermons that he preached with Fr. Devas, defending orthodoxy against the latter's assaults and sallies. These public dialogues or debates were as effective as they were popular.

For conferences and retreats he was in no less demand than he was for sermons. He was particularly fond of children and very successful in retreats to boys at Colleges and girls at Convent Schools, but his talent for giving retreats to the diocesan clergy was a marked one. Of these he gave very many, the last at Mount St. Mary's in August, 1939, to the Leeds clergy. In 1936 he was invited to Rome to give the retreats at the English and Scots Colleges, and in 1939 he returned to Rome to give other retreats.

Engagements of this sort took him far and wide, abroad as well as in England and Ireland. He did the Lent Course, for instance, at San Silvestro in Capite, Rome, in 1926, at Our Lady of Lourdes, New York, in 1929, and at the Cathedral, Jamaica, in 1934. His 1934 tour provides a fair sample of his energy: he left England on January 12 and returned on June 15 and meanwhile had travelled some 18,000 miles and spoken in public on 134 occasions. Fr. Parsons, S.J., of the Catholic University of Washington, has testified to the esteem in which he was held in America.

His lecturing, then, went on apace, and pamphlets and books appeared. And in time Fr. Woodlock became "news." "He had a real power," says Fr. Martindale, "of *seeing* what was religiously to the fore and important

—at the moment, and he immediately determined to *do* something about it." With all the forcefulness of his "aggressive yet engaging" personality he became a great apologist for the Faith, doughty in defence and in attack. He was not a Newman, and the temper of his mind was not spontaneously congenial to all his brethren; after all, for some minds any combative apologetics stands in subconscious contrast to the subtlety and insights of which a more "disinterested" theology or history is capable. Hence some have thought that Fr. Frank suffered from the lack of an early rigorous training in the use and assessment of evidence, that he was a propagandist whose temptation was to "make out a case" for this or that; and it has been thought that his elaborate indexed dossiers of clippings and references were no substitute for getting right inside the genuine Orthodox, say, or Anglican theology or mentality. Yet scoring a point was never anything he was tempted to, as an habitual element of his mind, and of this the large number of distinguished Anglican friends that he made is sufficient warrant. But he was not a scholar, nor was he widely or deeply read. He knew his limitations and was careful in such controversies as those on Anglican orders; but having the ready tongue and quick mind of a good barrister, he could generally make his points in spoken argument.

Quickly seeing what needed to be done, he was quick to do it as best he could. Indeed he was fearless on all occasions. He was often invited to the Foyle Luncheons at Grosvenor House, where he would indomitably get up to answer H. G. Wells or Arnold Bennett or some other public man who was the chief speaker for the occasion. That, perhaps, isn't too hard a thing to do after the first couple of times, but there are delicious stories of Fr. Frank's intrepidly rising to crack tougher nuts, as once at some philosophical discussion in Oxford, just when the argument was at its most tortuous and subtle, and giants like Joseph and Prichard were at close grips with mandarins like Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, he was seen rising from his chair to speak his mind and confound both sides alike. At Oxford theological

societies (for he was often the guest of Fr. Martin D'Arcy at Campion Hall) he could and did intervene to no little purpose, and occasions are not unknown on which Fr. Woodlock, who failed in his final theological examination (and was grieved by this failure) and who, it would seem, had not in fact studied formal theology seriously, stepped in severely but as gently as he could to rescue Professors of (formal) theology when they were floundering.

Fr. Frank's files of references and cuttings were one of the two perpetually fresh subjects of banter. The other was, of course, his relations with the Press, and here he was teased mercilessly. "He enjoyed being joked about these things," one of his brethren said, "as when one expressed innocent surprise that *The Times* had discovered not only when he was preaching but also on what subject and had sent a reporter; or again when one paper produced a picture of *Father Woodlock in his London Garden*, we wondered how the photographer had managed to take the snap without Fr. Woodlock's being aware of it! A great advertisement triumph, which certainly pleased him though he had had no hand in it, was when, during the *Prayer Book* debates in the House of Commons, his writings were quoted in the House by each side!"

Were there any who were spinsterish about this sort of thing? It may be doubted; his integrity was too transparent. His practice came out of a conviction that Catholics ought to be known about and to break into every department of society in whatever way was possible in the present-day organization of society. Hence, as Fr. Martindale says, "he deliberately *sought* publicity. In this he was perfectly logical, and even if he liked excitement and knowing people and attending functions, he neither began nor ended for self's sake, and others, who sometimes winced at his methods, may well have been yielding to shyness, to a finicky sense of scholarliness (an inverted snobbery), to a timid reticence such as to prevent that active apostolate which Fr. Woodlock—and surely he was right?—deemed so necessary. He would at all costs preach eternal truths in the language of the day to those to whom most of us

speak in no language at all. . . . But for all his flamboyance was there a humbler man than he? in some ways more childlike? more open to affectionate chaff? more generous? . . ."

Throughout all these years Fr. Frank's room was a thronged centre for all those many visitors who passed through Farm Street. For his acquaintances were without end, and he had many friends—and some intimate ones who loved him deeply. In ordinary conversation he had plenty to say, and being both a vigorous personality and a good talker usually led the conversation: but it was conversation and not monologue, and in the presence of any who was a better talker than he was himself he was a very good listener.

As in his controversial work, so in his personal relations charity and patience, understanding sympathy, generosity and a charm that was the natural expression of a gentle heart—these were the qualities that stood out. Many came to him in trouble, and for almost twenty years, of course, right up to the day of his death, he was the Director of the Farm Street Sodality. A few women but more men held him in high esteem as a spiritual director, and the very considerable number of converts that he made is but one testimony to the fruitfulness of his priesthood. He made a practice, too, we are told, of visiting a number of old and suffering people who were cheered by his presence and by his conversation.

Among all this activity he never, apparently, took what could properly be called a holiday. The pace was unabating—until the last year or so of his life, when a breakdown in health began to threaten and there was cause for anxiety. When Fr. Martindale left for Denmark in the summer of 1939, he thought that Fr. Woodlock was getting seriously ill—and he was too often despondent. He felt that he had been a failure, and had less and less heart for continuing the remorseless hard work to which he dedicated night no less than day. But there was no awareness of immediate danger, and death came very quickly. It was the evening of the eleventh of April, and he

suddenly felt weak and tired. But he thought that a cup of tea would be enough to revive him ; he was obviously unwell, and while the tea was being brought one of his brethren went with him to his room so that he could rest there. But in his room he said, " I am not feeling well . . . not at all well," and died. He was approaching his sixty-ninth year, and the year before had celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his entrance into the noviceship.

For an impression of the Farm Street period of Fr. Woodlock's life we are again indebted to the affectionate pen of Fr. Bellanti, and we shall quote him in full.

" Others besides ourselves must have recognized that, in spite of all he meant to Stonyhurst, his energy and talents deserved a wider audience. Farm Street was now to call upon resources which Stonyhurst had left untapped. He had made a name for himself as a Senior Chaplain in World War One. He now passed to a church that could still call on the services of such eminent Fathers as Galton, Considine, Martindale, Steuart, Devas and the then-quite-young Fr. D'Arcy. Did he find much difficulty in matching himself with this galaxy of high lights ? I should doubt it. Others who lived with him and happily survive will have more to say on this most fruitful and well-known side of his life's work. I cannot refrain from recording my impressions as a frequent visitor. Whenever I came to Mount Street I at once climbed up the six flights (for it took years before he, having got the benefactors, could get round the bugaboos and instal that inestimable blessing, the electric lift) to No. 19. What a joy it always was to rap at his door, to hear his resigned ' Come in,' and then, amid swift recognition, to meet his shining eyes and glad welcome ! It was good to see that Farm Street hadn't changed him. True, his stature had developed amid new interests and responsibilities, but he remained essentially the same Fr. Francis, drawing into his charmed circle all that was fresh and unsolemnified in that decorous residence. Jesuit visitors passing through London would somehow gravitate to his room, and what a gift he had for drawing them out and eliciting the candid and unpretentious

stories and experiences of those who not only had 'inside knowledge' but knew they could divulge it in his circle without fear of indiscretion. Many must recall Room No. 19 on the top-landing, with its congestion of books, pamphlets, papers, press-cuttings and galley-sheets: Fr. Frank in his desk-chair beaming through his tortoise-shell glasses, throwing the ball round, provoking the newcomer by some audacious misstatement, cannily organising a theological dog-fight, warily watching the thrusts and parries in the battle of wits, until he had created an atmosphere of familiar geniality in which the man from the Gregorian or the Biblicum or the States or the Far East could launch forth and tell us what we all wanted to know. How vividly one remembers evenings in which Fr. Edmund Walsh, fresh from Bolshevik experiences, told us of the incredible wolf-packs of abandoned children, of the concerted famine with all its iniquities, of the Vatican and the Hoover Relief Mission, of the recovery of the body of St. Andrew Bobola, or, on another occasion, of the Mexico of Calles and the anomalies of persecution in our days . . . directly answering every question, without any boggling over the unprintable details, exposing the sad scandals that subserve sanctity and giving us all no little food for thought. Again the high light might be Malines and its ramifications, or Fr. Burrows and Fr. Power of the Biblical H.Q., discussing an amazing speculation on Jonah and the whale. Invariably Father Frank had something to contribute to the symposium. His the gift of clearing the thick smoke and setting the sparks flying. The happy warrior never lacked some fresh bête-noire or Aunt Sally, be it the Gloomy Dean, or the Green Quarterly, or the Editor of a Catholic weekly, or continental intrusions into the Reunion controversy, or anything flavorous in contemporary history. His sorted array of press-cuttings was always at hand to keep the game alive, if not to trump the last trick. How he found time to keep so vigilant an eye on the press, with all his visitors, and converts, and lectures, and sermons, and thronged engagements, few really knew. Those who appreciated his frequent interventions in print

and the closeness of his *rapport* with Fleet Street might be excused for concluding that this was a task imposed on him by the shrewdness of 'the higher command.' How wide they were of the mark! The place he won for himself in the press-world, the extent to which reporters used him, quoted him, demanded a paragraph from him or a half-column or a letter, was due to his own initiative, his sense of the value of publicity, his understanding and sympathy with the difficulties of non-Catholic press-men, his conviction that one gained nothing by ignoring the papers. At the outset it seemed to many that these intrusions were uncalled for, cheap, undignified; he was indeed more criticised than lauded. But he held on his way. Gradually adverse criticism died down since none could deny his sureness in hitting the nail on the head or in getting his comment or correction into the next issue. He was deeply interested in every aspect of Anglicanism, came into contact with many High Church circles and made many friends among churchmen. His scrupulous fairness in controversy won him the respect of leading Anglicans and the personal friendship of the venerable Lord Halifax, with whom he stayed at Hickling and for whom he entertained a deep regard. Yet, welcome as he was in so many gatherings, he never was happier than in the company of his fellow Jesuits. With them he could be just himself, utterly informal, ready to relax, gaily irresponsible. In later years as his energies flagged and his heart tired, how he looked forward to his Christmas stay at Heythrop, counting the days like a schoolboy!

"It may well be asked how, with so much on his hands at Farm Street, he found any time for serious reading. He early elaborated and quickly adapted himself to a peculiar régime. Daily he said the 11 o'clock Mass. The little of morning that was left he devoted to a correspondence of the predominantly post-card type. He began to wake up, as he used to say, after lunch. Practically all his afternoons were booked up, as well as a number of evenings, but if he could he avoided engagements after dinner, since this was the time when his Jesuit friends and visitors sought him and

found him at his best. At 10 p.m. the house passed into the silence of prayer followed by the silence of sleep. There was no chance of being interrupted. For three or more hours he could now set to, gutting the latest book, annotating margins with his coloured pencils, cutting snippets out of the papers, filing notes, filling his dossiers, briefing himself for his lectures, and seasoning every course with apt allusions and arresting quotations. He had a flair for this form of composition, sure that he knew what people wanted to know and that he could put it across with the minimum of preface and the maximum of punch. He modestly decried this kind of work ; called himself a vulgariser, a mere journeyman. He made no pretence to expert knowledge in any subject. This was a half-truth, for he took immense pains in eliciting from the experts any information he lacked, while dismissing anything foreign to his purpose or likely to be above the heads of his audience. Only those who recognised the apostolic urge which prompted his ' stunts ' would have guessed how much reading, and thought, and careful selection, had gone into the preparation. All seemed so easy and so simple. In the pulpit or on the platform he used his portfolio of notes and cuttings to great effect, picking up each excerpt and displaying it with all the fondness of a showman. His tall stature and dominating presence caught the eye at once. A slight stoop, a pleasantly conversational voice and natural manner created the ' sympathetic ' atmosphere he looked for. Without any formalities he would state his case, give each bit of evidence its due, marshal his argument with convincing logic and sum up with a deep earnestness all the more effective because it had been held in reserve. None could doubt that, in the controversial field that he had chosen for himself, he was a master.

" One gladly recalls how much he was refreshed and stimulated by lecture-tours and sermon courses in the States (where his brother Tom was a commanding figure in all Catholic Action), at San Silvestro in Rome, in Dublin. From all these excursions he came back with a new lease of life. The time came when he could no longer make light

of the labours which once came so easy but now demanded so much effort and produced such sheer exhaustion. The last time I saw him I ventured to rally him in the hope of bringing him back to something like his old, gay self. He saw through it all, smiled at my well meant efforts, and spoke of the approach of the end with a simplicity as natural and startling as that with which he admitted all his life's mistakes and misadventures. The end came soon, very mercifully. One doesn't measure one's friends. To others he may have seemed *great* ; to me always he was a *grand* personality."

Fr. James Brodrick has written an account of the more private and spiritual life of Fr. Woodlock, and with this we shall end. It makes a fitting conclusion.

" Perhaps another, who lived on the same floor as Fr. Woodlock for fifteen years, may add a few more words of witness. First, it is to be said in the interests of truth that he had one terrible vice, namely an ungovernable passion for slamming doors. Frank never learned to open or shut a door like a Christian. He *attacked* doors with a sort of savage and joyful fury. Each time he entered his room a small earthquake occurred at Farm Street. Many a lively altercation had I with him about the proper function of door-handles, which are obviously meant to be turned and not used as mere battering-rams. So much for the evil side of him. Of the good one could talk *in saecula saeculorum* ; of his tolerance, his generosity, his forgivingness, his invincible good-humour, his abounding charity. He was the busiest man in the house and always had about a dozen irons in the fire at the same time ; yet when you went to his room to borrow a book or ask him a question, or, more often, merely to gossip, he made you feel that you were the one person in the world he wanted to see. Fr. Ernest Hull, Fr. Henry Day, and other venerable members of the Province could bear eloquent witness to his quite extraordinary hospitality. He used to lecture me, who tended to become a moody misanthrope when the summer season at Farm Street opened, on the necessity and obligation of being gracious to all comers, even the most Ruritarian.

"Every morning, for an hour before his Mass at 11 o'clock, he used to parade up and down the corridor, wholly intent on his meditation and his beads. Except when he was out of the house, I have never known him once to miss this morning parade. He might give the impression sometimes of being a law unto himself, but that was only in trivial matters, and in the fundamentals he was always a first-class religious. His piety, though quite undemonstrative, went very deep. It was his lifelong habit never to pass the domestic Chapel, no matter in how much of a hurry, without slipping in for a moment's visit. He used to encourage me to do the same. 'Even if you only make half a genuflexion, it is something,' he would say. He particularly liked his room, and, be it said, manœuvred himself into it, because it has a little window giving on to the Chapel. People who were amused, or perhaps even irritated, by his publicity 'stunts' did not always realize the amount of sheer honest-to-God drudgery there was in his apostolic life. He found the burden of addressing his elderly and somewhat sparse Sodality every Saturday of the year a very heavy one, but he bore it uncomplainingly and gave of his best to the dozen or so stalwarts who turned up regularly, hail, rain, or snow. I have heard those good old men speak with enthusiasm of his conferences. Again, his grand staged sermons at Farm Street or Westminster Cathedral were far from being the whole of his pulpit activities. He was to be found just as often in humble East End or suburban churches where there was no glory whatever attached to the occasion. He had made it a rule with himself never to refuse an invitation or petition to preach anywhere, provided he was free. I have an unforgettable picture of him in my mind's eye, setting out in the rain one bitter afternoon to catch a bus to Ilford. He told me he was feeling pretty miserable, and he looked it in his shabby overcoat and awful hat. He kept on his gown for its little extra warmth, but it hung down at the back and made him look for all the world like an ailing stork at the Zoo. Frank would never let anybody down. If he said he would do a thing, he would infallibly do it, cost him what it might.

Shortly before he died, he went to Wandsworth to give a triduum to the Sacred Heart nuns, when he was completely unfitted for such an effort. There he had the terrible experience of being violently sick as he gave Benediction. He never got over this distressing mishap, and could not be made to see that in the eyes of God and His angels it redounded infinitely to his credit. I could tell a score of tales to illustrate the genuine humility and spirit of self-sacrifice which underlay the surface bravura of this good man.

" There was only one man in the world who could render Frank as quiet as a mouse, and that was his elder brother Tom. Tom, a splendid figure of a man, a power on Wall Street, and a daily communicant, used to spend a month in London every year, and then it was my privilege to go to a farewell dinner with him and Frank at the Hyde Park Hotel. There you saw a new Frank altogether, a silent worshipping Frank, drinking in every word that fell from Big Brother's lips. They made a perfectly charming pair, but when the time came for them to part they did not so much as shake hands. ' So long, Frank,' said Tom. ' So long, Tom,' said Frank. And that was that. As we wended our way homeward I said to Frank : ' That was a cold-blooded way to say good-bye to your brother. Why, you may never see him again.' He shrugged and answered : ' We Woodlocks don't wear our hearts on our sleeves.' It was very true. Frank kept the best of himself for those silent turns up and down the corridor every morning."

Fr. Woodlock's published work comprises the following books and brochures : *Lourdes Miracles* ; *The Anglican Church and Reunion* ; *The Reformation and the Blessed Eucharist* (1927) ; *Catholicism* ; *The True Rationalism* ; *Constantinople, Canterbury, and Rome* (1923) ; *Modernism and the Church of Christ* (1925). He wrote, too, several C.T.S. pamphlets, and articles for the *Month* and other periodicals.

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